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REVIEWS

Grammaire de Conversation et de Lecture. Cours Complet.

By Daniel Créhange Rosenthal and Victor Chankin. H.
Holt & Co. 1918. viii+423 pp. Price \$1.32.

The "Grammaire de Conversation et de Lecture" of Rosenthal and Chankin offers an exceedingly practical combination of the direct and grammatical methods. Each lesson opens with a passage of connected French, which with a little ingenuity on the part of the teacher can readily be explained without recourse to English, and with the books closed: When the books are opened the pupil finds before him the passage of connected French, a section of French questions forcing a lively reworking of the material, and a French exercise which by the use of blanks calls to his attention the grammatical difficulties in the following way: "Montrez-moi—brosse et—canif." In addition to this material built up according to the principles of the direct method, the pupil finds a French-English vocabulary classified according to parts of speech and arranged not alphabetically but according to the appearance of the words in the text. This has the great advantage of forcing the student back to the sentence as a unit rather than the word and helps him to follow a connected line of thought in French. There is also a clear explanation in English of the grammar involved and an English exercise. This six-fold division, French text, French questionnaire, French exercise, French-English vocabulary, English explanation, and English exercise, is continued in every one of the sixty-four lessons, followed by an appendix containing setting-up exercises, proverbs, and all the important irregular verbs. The book is preceded by a table of contents and followed by French and English vocabularies and an index. Foot-notes are reduced to a minimum and the printed page is a delight to the eye because of its excellent spacing and its judicious use of heavy type for emphasis.

Every provision is made for keeping the atmosphere of the lesson French by introducing gradually the necessary grammatical vocabulary accompanied at first by the English: "Remplacez le tiret par le pronom interrogatif convenable (Replace the dash by the suitable interrogative pronoun)." At pleasing intervals pupil and teacher come upon a French picture offering free play to the ideas of the teacher as it is not made a part of the lesson. The grammatical progression is excellent and is derived from a text which does not hesitate to introduce at once such verbs as "mettre" and "prendre." "Etre" is reserved for the eighth lesson and "avoir" for the eleventh. Nothing but the present tense is used in the first twelve lessons. The vocabulary of the first ten lessons deals entirely with the activities of the class-room. Such subjects as the family, John's birthday, and Mary and the hidden box of candy then follow. The vocabulary progresses rather rapidly, and lays the emphasis on the noun rather than the verb. The vocabulary of the first fourteen lessons includes 103 nouns, 49 verbs, 28 adjectives, 26 adverbs, 24 phrases, 18 prepositions, and 15 pronouns, a total of 275 words. In this

connection it is well to stress the warning given by the authors in the preface, that at least three or four days must be spent on each lesson. Would it not have been better perhaps to have split the lessons into smaller units adapted to a single day's work? The analysis given of the first fourteen lessons indicates the wealth of material contained in the entire book. Fifty lessons will carry the student through all the grammatical knowledge that should be included in the first year of high-school and give him a vocabulary rather above the average first-year vocabulary in extent. There are two features of the book which deserve special mention: the admirable review lessons which synthesize the preceding material, and the careful introduction of irregular verbs in connection with interesting reading matter.

The one great drawback to this work is the treatment of pronunciation. The statements made are inadequate and unscientific. If followed exactly, bad results would be produced. In the treatment of vowels no effort is made to tell the exact position of the lips and tongue. In the discussion of consonants, the statement is made that consonants are pronounced as in English or approximately so. This is precisely the worst thing to tell a student who must be impressed with the necessity of discarding his usual habits of speech. The best way to make a student sensitive to the difference between a French and an American "l," for example, is to show him that it is the position of the tongue that makes the difference. Such omissions assume a great deal of additional instruction on the part of the teacher. The same is true of the first lesson, which introduces all of the French vowel sounds except the closed "eu." This does no harm if the first lesson has been preceded by a slow initiation into French sounds; otherwise, it is pedagogically wrong. Consideration of these facts leads to the following conclusions: Either the statements in regard to pronunciation should be made completely accurate or they should be omitted altogether and teachers should be referred for matters of pronunciation to a manual such as the phonetic manual of Wilkins, Nitze, and Parmenter, University of Chicago Press or The Knowles-Favard "Perfect French Possible," D. C. Heath & Co.

A much less important criticism is suggested by the following sentences in the English exercises: "What do you put the boy's grammar on?" p. 29. "What are the pupils erasing the sentences with?" p. 36. Why the preposition at the end of the sentence when it makes equally bad French and English? Occasionally the English is odd: "To whom does the teacher pronounce the words?" p. 33 "How do you say 'on me'?" p. 41.

On the whole, however, the book deserves high commendation, and it seems as if it could not fail to give fine results in the hands of a good teacher.

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ETHEL PRESTON.

Tres Comedias por Jacinto Benavente, edited by John Van Horne.

D. C. Heath & Co., 1918. 12mo. xxxvi+ 189 pp. Price 72 cents.

Spanish Fables in Verse, edited with introduction and vocabulary by Elizabeth C. Ford and J. D. M. Ford. D. C. Heath & Co.,

1918. 12mo. xxii+. 132 pp. Price 60 cents.